

Montana's Circle of American Masters

Inspired by Our Lands...made by Our Hands

Object: "Short Bull" Canteen Bag | Size: 6 1/4" diameter, 30" long, 2" deep

Materials: White brain-tanned buckskin, Size 13 cut and seed beads, Size 11 seed beads

Artist Background: Jackie Larson Bread, Beadwork Artist | Medium: Beads and leather

Jackie Larson Bread lives in Great Falls where she is a full-time beadwork artist. She grew up on the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning and credits the time she spent watching her grandmother bead as a large part of her initial interest in beading. Her grandmother also provided her with ongoing inspiration that led her in the discovery of how to "create" through the time-consuming, delicate art of beading.

Throughout her schooling in New Mexico, Jackie maintained her interest in Blackfeet beadwork. She continued to bead and helped develop "illusionary pictorial beadwork" – a style in which pictorial depth and detail is created by using different graduated shades of beads. After returning to Montana from Santa Fe, she worked at the Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning where she studied and was inspired by the magnificent beaded pieces housed there. Jackie has also spent a lot of time with her mentors, who strongly influenced her work.

She is best known for her intricate portraits done in beads, often on the outside of leather boxes. Currently her beadwork is influenced in large part by the stylized depictions of Plains Ledger art. She also finds inspiration in the bold Blackfeet geometric designs, which she translates into beaded bags, boxes, parasols, and other utilitarian traditional items. She often chooses to work with blue, historically a favorite color of her tribe.

Describing her own work, Jackie says, "The designs I use are primarily inspired by parfleche designs, lodge designs, and old style floral designs. The beaded perimeters are my signature style, and virtually all of my pieces have some form of this border... I try to place myself in the frame of mind of a nineteenth century artist. Using a limited palette of colors, I strive to produce a beaded piece true to that time period. I use old stock beads or modern re-runs of old colors, to lend a feel of authenticity to each piece."

Along with Oklahoma artist Marcus Amerman, Jackie is considered a leader in the movement that resulted in beadwork becoming a primary element in contemporary Indian art. Rising bead artists credit her influence on their work. She continues to teach traditional beading in workshops at schools in Browning and across Montana, Idaho, and California.

Her art is included in numerous public and private collections, including the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. She has also received many awards from places such as the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Santa Fe's Indian Market, and the Northern Plains Tribal Art Show in South Dakota. She donates generously to fundraisers and has been featured in a number of national publications, including Southwest Art. Jackie's husband, Nathan Bread, is also an artist who creates life-size metal sculptures, intricately carved wooden figures, stone sculptures, paintings, jewelry, and beadwork.



Great Falls Tribune photo

Lesson Plan: Montana Standards for Arts: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

<<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Accred/cstandards.html>>

Indian Education Essential Understandings: 1, 2, 3, 4; essential understandings 5, 6, 7 can easily be incorporated by expanding the history portion of this lesson plan.

<<http://www.opi.mt.gov/indianed2/IEFAGuidance.html>>

Goals and objectives:

The learner will gain an understanding of the design and process of traditional Blackfoot beadwork through research, discussion and hands-on project design. Students will draw their own personal design based on traditional Blackfoot patterns and then create a small beaded picture. Cultural groups have traditional designs that belong to them and identify them. Although such designs may inspire people outside the group, only members of the cultural group should use its traditional design.

Jackie Larson strives to be “creative but not re-creative.” Her designs are rooted in traditional styles but she creates her own design from those inspirations.

Warm-up/pre-project preparation:

- Resource for general Blackfeet history: Museum of the Plains Indian
- <www.browningmontana.com/museum>
- Look up reservations of Montana, locate them on a map and compare to previous or traditional territory. (Additionally students can research when each reservation was established.) Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education:
<<http://www.opi.mt.gov/indianed2/IEFAGuidance.html>>
- Study and compare traditional and contemporary beading design: Traditional – Plains Indian Museum <<http://www.bbhc.org/collections/bbhc/Search.cfm?method=collectioncategory>>
- choose “Dress and Adornment” and press “Search”
- Contemporary - Museum of the Plains Indian
<http://www.doi.gov/iacb/museums/museum_plains.html>
- Have students discuss the design differences with the class, and have them each choose a beading design they like and use it for inspiration to create their own design.
- Help students consider the color choices of beads they will use, which can impact the final outcome of the design.

Materials needed:

- Embroidery hoops, 8" or 10" work best
- Burlap or other loose weave material
- Quilting, embroidery or any larger-size needles with blunt tip, or plastic needles
- Quilt or embroidery thread
- Pony beads or other larger-hole beads that needles can easily pass through

Project:**Have students:**

1. Cut burlap in a circle at least 2 inches larger than the embroidery hoop.
2. Insert the burlap into the hoop, pulling it tight, then draw design lightly on the burlap using pencil or marker.
3. Insert thread into eye of needle, then pull two loose ends of thread to meet and tie them together in a knot.
4. Push the needle up through burlap from the back at the starting point of the design, pulling knot tight to the back of the fabric, place a bead (or two) over the needle onto the thread, then push the needle back down through material and pull the thread tight again.
5. Continue on, pushing the needle up from the back in the desired position, placing one or two more beads on the needle and then pulling the needle back down through the material, until the color scheme and design are achieved.
6. When finished, use the needle to loop the thread through the material a few times (no beads) and knot it at the end to secure the beading. (A drop of glue may be placed on all the knots to make sure they hold.)

Evaluation:

- Students stayed on task working to complete project.
- Students followed design drawn on the burlap.
- Students considered bead colors and used appropriate color scheme for design.
- Students used traditional ideas to create and be creative in their own design.
- Students could explain the difference between the traditional design and their own design.

Cross curriculum:

- Social Studies and History: Study of the Native American cultures of Montana
- Design and Symbolism: Online Encyclopedia of Western Signs and Ideograms
- <<http://www.symbols.com/>> and National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration <http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/edu/lessons/lesson_symbol.html>
- Art Color Theory: Using bead patterns based on warm colors, cool colors, contrast, or monochromatic color schemes. Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_theory>

Variations:

Student's design could be drawn on mat board with marker, then large beads could be glued to the board in an original pattern again using appropriate design and colors.

Vocabulary:

Traditional – a long-standing action or belief of a community or group usually handed down from one generation to another

Contemporary – modern; something that is of this time period

Creative – using the imagination to create something new

Re-creative – using another person's design or pattern as the basis for creating another design or pattern

Inspiration – a good idea, stimulation of the human mind to bring about a creative or new thought

Reservations – a territory reserved by tribes as a permanent tribal homeland

Color Theory – the science of color, how colors mix to make new colors, how they look next to each other and how certain colors can cause an emotional reaction in people

Warm colors – reds, yellows and oranges create a sense of movement or excitement

Cool Colors – blues, greens and violet are more calming and relaxing

Complimentary colors – colors that are across from each other on the color wheel such as red and green, yellow and purple, and blue and orange

Contrast – the difference in color and light

Monochromatic – using shades of one color only, such as using only shades of blue from very pale blue to navy blue

Color wheel – a circle divided into the primary colors equally spaced around the circle with the secondary color between them

Primary colors – red, yellow and blue

Secondary colors – green, orange, violet

Think About it!**Look at the picture of Jackie Larson Bread's beadwork:**

- What do you like about her work?
- Why do you think she likes to create her own design?

- How long do you think it would take to create work like this?
- Which do you like better, the contemporary designs or the traditional designs? Why?
- If you had a piece of clothing with beadwork like this, do you think it would be something you would wear everyday or just for special occasions?
- When you created your design, what were you thinking about?

Lesson plan:

Cheryl Bannes, artist-in-residence, Lewistown, Montana

Direct questions to:

Beck McLaughlin, Education Director, Montana Arts Council

1-800-282-3092, bemclaughlin@mt.gov

Further resources at: www.art.mt.gov

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